

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Population projection of 27,000 isn't alarmist, board says

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The Patriot Ledger

DUXBURY — A consulting company's calculation that the Duxbury population could eventually nearly double is more conservative than alarmist, according to a study done by members of the planning board.

Early this year, John Brown Associates, a Cambridge consulting firm, released a study that said Duxbury could wind up with 27,000 residents if the available land in town was fully developed under the current zoning rules.

▶ DUXBURY ◀

Some people in town said that estimate was intended to scare residents. The planning board responded to that criticism by soliciting an estimate from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, a regional planning agency, and by taking its own look at the possible build-out.

Last night, board members William Zachmann and Robert Wilson presented their preliminary findings, saying that Brown Associates actually underestimated the potential for growth in town. They did not present

a population figure, but using their methods would lead to a number in the vicinity of 30,000.

Zachmann and Wilson stressed that an exact figure is not particularly important. Any such large-scale growth would be detrimental in the town's future, they said.

"The John Brown (population) densities are already too high for the goals of the town," Zachmann said. "This is something that's got to be addressed if we don't want to run into a problem down the line."

Prior to the town election in March, planning board candidates

Brian Daley and David O'Connell called the John Brown Associates build-out figures alarmist. Both were running against incumbents and neither was elected.

Zachmann and Wilson conducted their research with the help of town officials and using records from the assessors' office. In examining the previous work, they found several flaws that they believe resulted in an underestimation of Duxbury's population-growth potential.

For example, they said, some large lots that currently contain only one house could be subdivided and fur-

ther developed. Planning board member Amy MacNab noted that many of the plans the board sees each year are for such subdivisions of property.

The previous work also did not take into account the possibility of cluster developments, in which the housing density could be greater than in other residential areas. Zachmann and Wilson found.

Because of the possibility for extensive development, the planning board will consider seeking town approval to have the zoning bylaws reviewed.